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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the research on sociocultural and psychological factors as they relate to the working mother and makes some suggestions as to how the family, community, and psychological services can assist the working mother in dealing with the problems peculiar to her situation. It is only recently that women have commenced leaving the home to work because of personal desires rather than economic need. As a result, these working women find themselves in the position of challenging the values of their family, community, and self. These women need support, understanding, and assistance during this period of change. In addition to the need for family and community support and psychological services to aid these women, there is a need for research in determining the influences and effects of the mother's working. (Author/SL)

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SOCIOCULTURAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS OF THE WORKING MOTHER, PARTICULARLY MOTHERS OF PRESCHOOL AGE CHILDREN: THE RESULTING PROBLEMS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FAMILY, COMMUNITY AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

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OVERVIEW

"Women have always worked to produce goods and services for themselves and their families." (Nye, 1974b, p. 1). These women have included those who are single, married and mothers. Prior to the Industrial Revolution women worked primarily in the home setting. Beginning with the Industrial Revolution and the advent of factories, women began to work outside the home for salaries or wages at an accelerated rate. Since the Industrial Revolution, and more specifically since World War II, the number of women employed outside the home has rapidly increased. (Abbott, 1910).

The home "status" of women employed outside the home has been an important discriminating factor. Prior to World War II, most employed women were single. The number of married women working outside the home was very small and the number of married women with minor children working was almost non-existent. For example, in 1900, 20 percent of the total working force were women, but only 3 percent were married, and although no data exist on what proportion of these married working women had dependent children at home, it is estimated at less than one percent. (Nye, 1974b, p. 3). Between 1900 and World War II the number of women working outside the home rapidly increased from 20 to 25 percent of the total working force and the percent of those who were married increased from 15 to 30 percent. Although

statistics do not exist on the percent of married women working with dependent children prior to 1940, by 1940 it was only approximately eight percent.

After World War II and up to the present these statistics began to reverse themselves. The number of married women entering the labor force began to rapidly increase from 22 percent in 1948 to 41.5 percent in 1972. This increase was largely seen in married women with dependent children, including children under 5 years of age. In 1948, 26.0 percent of married, working women had children between 6 and 17 years of age and 10.7 percent had children under 6 years of age; whereas in 1972, 50.2 percent of married, working women had children between 6 and 17 years of age and 30.1 percent had children under 6 years. (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1971 and 1972, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1971 and Hayghe 1973).

Although women with children of school age have entered the labor force in greater numbers than have mothers of preschool children, the proportionate increase has been larger among those with preschool children. Between 1948 and 1965 the rate of increase was 152 percent for mothers of school-age children and 158 percent for mothers of preschool children. Between 1965 to 1970 the proportionate increase was only 18 percent for mothers of school-age children and 32 percent for mothers of preschool children. (Nye, 19746, p. 13).

Based on the above information we can conclude that:

(1) the number of women employed outside the home has increased significantly since the Industrial Revolution; (2) the number of married women employed outside the home has been significant only since the turn of the century; and (3) the number of married women with dependent children working outside the home has been significant only since World War II. Similarly, the number of women employed outside the home has been rapidly increasing since the Industrial Revolution, but only since World War II have married women with dependent children significantly contributed to this increase. Since World War II, married women with dependent children have been the main contributing force to the acceleration in the number of working women. More specifically, since World War II married women with dependent children both in-school and at preschool age contributed fairly equally to the proportionate increase of working women, but since 1965, married women with dependent children at preschool age have been the major contributors proportionately to the increase of the number of employed women. It is this latter group--working mothers of preschool age children--which will be the focus of this paper.

With the focus on working mothers of preschool age children, the following questions arise: What kind of mothers with preschool age children work? What are their jobs? What are their backgrounds? What psychological effect does working have on them and their family? What are the resulting implications for

family, community and psychological services of working mothers with preschool age children? These are the questions which we will address in the following chapters.

SOCIOCULTURAL PHENOMENON OF WORKING MOTHERS OF PRESCHOOLERS

It is known that whether a woman works is related to her education, marital status, and husband's income; to the number of children she has and the age of those children; to her race, and ethnic background. We know that the number of working women who are married and have dependent children has been increasing at an increasing rate since World War II and that the number of working women who are married and have preschool age children has also been accelerating, primarily since 1965. But what else do we know about the working mother with preschool age children? Who is she? What is her education, marital status, husband's income, number of children, residence, race, and ethnic background? What do we know about these variables as they relate to the working mothers of preschoolers? How does she compare with other working mothers? These are questions which this chapter will address.

Well-educated women as a whole move into the labor force much faster than those with little education. The proportion employed among those with graduate degrees is more than three times that for those with less than an eighth-grade education. (Nye, 1974b, p. 17). In addition, women with some graduate training earn about two and one-half times as much as do those with less than fourth-grade education. (Bowen and Finegan, 1969, p. 118). However, differences in the proportion of women

employed by education level are less for women with children under six. Therefore proportionately, working mothers with preschool age children tend to be less well educated and receive lower salaries than working women as a whole.

In 1972, 42 percent of employed women were married and living with their husbands, an increase of 800 percent since 1940. (Nye, 1974, p. 14; Hayghe, 1973). Of those, 30.1 percent had children at preschool age. In this same year, 40 percent of employed women were widowed, divorced or separated, an increase of 100 percent since 1940. (Nye, 1974b, p. 14). Of these, 47 percent had children at preschool age. (Waldman and Gover, 1972). In 1972, 70 percent of the employed widowed, divorced or separated women were divorced and 62 percent of these had preschool age children. (Hayghe, 1973). Based on these statistics, the probability of employed divorced women having preschool age children, is greater than employed widowed, divorced, or separated women, which in turn is greater than employed women married and living with their husbands.

The number of employed married women tends to decrease as other income increases. (Bowen and Finegan, 1969). Other income is largely effected by the husband's income. This drop was strongest for mothers of preschool age children.

Mothers of preschool age children who do work claim financial need as the main reason for working. This is based on a study reported by Rosenfeld and Perrella (1965) which

interviewed a national sample of women who started or stopped work in 1963. Slightly over 72 percent of the mothers of children under six cited financial motivation as the major reason, compared to about 61 percent of the mothers of children between 6 and 17; twice as many of the latter group (24.4 percent) indicated that personal satisfaction motivated them. However, 25 percent of all women who said they were working out of economic necessity indicated that they preferred not to work. The same percent existed for mothers of preschool age children who claimed to be working out of economic necessity.

Mothers with preschool age children are more likely to have husbands in the lower income brackets than other employed women and they tend to claim financial need as the major reason for working. Whether or not they cease to work because economic necessity is no longer a legitimate need is questionable.

Sweet's (1970, p. 197) analysis of 1960 census data shows that the proportion of women employed declines with the number of children and this is accelerated when children of preschool age are involved. Therefore, employed women with preschool age children are more likely to have fewer children then other employed women.

Age of children especially the age of preschoolers, has a significant effect on the number of women employed. Very young children reduces the number of women working more than do older preschool children. Sweet (1970) found that the presence of a

child under the age of one reduces the proportion of women in the labor force 17 percentage points below the average for all women with children under eighteen. A child one year of age reduces it 9 points; of age two, 7 points; three, 5 points; and four or five, 3 points.

Age of children also effects the number of hours the mothers work. The average work week for mothers of preschool children is about 32 hours compared with 37 for women with no children under eighteen. (Bowen and Finegan, 1969, p. 101). Employed women with a husband present and children under six are more likely to work part-time than women without preschool children. (Nye, 1964b, p. 25).

Age of child also significantly effects the number of women employed part-time. In 1967, approximately 16 percent of part-time employed married women had children under three, 31 percent had children three to five and 39 percent had children six to seventeen years of age. (U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, 1968). For women with spouse absent, preschool children have less effect on whether they take full- or part-time employment.

To summarize, women with preschool age children are less likely to work than women with older children and if they do work it is more likely that they will be employed part-time and have older preschool children.

Although we will not cite the statistics here, statistics

do exist which show that minority women, as opposed to white women, are much less effected in regard to employment by marital status, husband's income, and number and age of children. (U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, 1971; Parnes, et al 1970; Sobol, 1973, p. 76). A greater proportion of minority women are employed. (U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, 1971). As a result, employed minority women proportionately, are more likely to be married, have husband's income in a higher bracket, have larger families and children at preschool age than employed white women.

SUMMARY

This chapter has attempted to pinpoint some of the socio-cultural phenomenon peculiar to working mothers of preschool age children. The sociocultural factors focused on include: education, marital status, husband's income, number of children, age of children, race and ethnic background. Based on the statistics cited, it can be concluded that working mothers of preschoolers proportionately tend (1) to be less well educated and receive lower salaries; (2) to be first, divorced; second, divorced, widowed or separated; and third, married and living with spouse; (3) to have husband's in the lower income bracket; (4) claim financial need as the major reason for working; (5) to have a small family; (6) to have older preschoolers; (7) to work part-time, if they are living with spouse; (8) to be of a minority race.

PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS AND THE WORKING MOTHERS

The last chapter dealt with the sociocultural phenomenon peculiar to working mothers of preschool age children. This chapter will focus on the psychological and physical factors which affect and are affected by the mother's working, particularly the mother with preschool children. How does the mother's working affect the husband-wife relationship? How does it affect the power structure within the family and the division of labor? How does the mother's working affect the child? Finally, how does the mother's working affect her own attitudes, emotions and physical states? These are the questions which the following chapter will address. Unfortunately, much of the research does not control for ages of children of working mothers studied. As a result, we will generalize from the material available. Where it is possible, we will focus on the studies which control for preschool children.

To begin with, are the husband-wife relationships different in families in which the mother has paid employment? If they are different, is the difference or any portion of it attributable to behavior or feelings related to paid employment of the mother? The first question is an empirical one which has been studied by almost a dozen research teams. The result is a broad, although not complete, consensus. The second question as to whether the

differences are causal or selective is much more difficult to answer.

In answering the above questions, a variety of measures and many different types of samples and controlled variables were used. Feld (1963) analyzed marital happiness of a national sample of mothers age 21 or older. She found significantly greater happiness existed in families where the mother did not work. The differences in marital happiness between working and non-working mothers was greatest among women with the least amount of education.

Feldman (1965) studied the relationship between employment status of the mother and her marital satisfaction, employing a middle-class sample of 852 families, and found no significant differences. Feldman and Feldman (1973), utilizing the same measure of marital satisfaction with 1,325 poverty-level families, found that employed women had a significantly lower satisfaction level than nonemployed women. Axelson (1963) evaluated marital satisfaction of working and nonworking mothers from the husband's viewpoint. Their data showed substantial differences between positive marital satisfaction of husbands of nonworking wives and husbands of working wives. Sixty-one percent of the husbands whose wives did not work evaluated the marriage positively, as compared with 38 percent of the husbands whose wives were employed full-time. He did not assess for socioeconomic or other social variables.

Orden and Bradburn (1969) asked a large random sample of both wives and husbands, "Would you (or your spouse) work if you (or spouse) didn't need the money?" They also assessed for tensions, companionship, sociability and happiness with the marriages. The results showed a consistent relationship between the wife's enjoyment of work and her evaluation of her marriage. Those employed women who would not work except for the income averaged high on tensions and low on satisfactions. Except on companionship, appreciable differences favored the women who enjoyed their employment compared with those working only for income. The difference between housewives and women who enjoyed their paid employment was less; three of the five differences favored the full-time employed over the housewife, but the differences were small. However, age of children did show significant differences. When preschool children were at home, the differences in evaluation of the marriage favored the non-working mothers over mothers who were employed and enjoyed their work. This finding was true for the husband as well. As the children became older less difference existed between nonworking and working and enjoying-working mothers. When the total sample of full-time working mothers was compared with nonworking mothers differences evaporated.

We have touched on only a few of the many studies done on the effect of the working mother on the husband-wife relationship, in regard to marital happiness and satisfaction and related

variables. The results presented here are consistent with the results of the global research: slightly more marital problems exist among couples in which the mother is employed, but the differences exist mostly at the lower-class and lower-educational levels and in families of preschool age children. (Nye, 1974C, p. 206)

Maternal employment has also been shown to effect the power and division of labor within the family. (Bahr, 1974, p. 167). Power has been measured by such procedures as self-report regarding which spouse makes certain decisions (Blood and Wolfe, 1960; Bahr, 1972; Blood, 1967; Centers, et al, 1971; Safilios-Rothschild, 1967, 1969, 1970, and others), outcome of conflicts (Scanzoni, 1970; Bahr, et al, 1974; Bahr, 1972; Nye, 1970 and others), acceptance of which spouse's initial ideas (Blood and Hamblin, 1958), and extent to which one parent decided the other's behavior. (Hoffman, 1963b). Although power is a relatively imprecise concept and methodological and conceptual limitations exist, research findings show that mother-wife employment does increase the family power of the working mother. (Bahr, 1974, p. 172-3).

The result of empirical research has shown that employed mothers tend to have greater power than nonemployed mothers. (Bahr, 1972; Blood, 1963; Kligler, 1954; Scanzoni, 1970 and others). Employed mothers tend to have more power in financial decision making (Blood, 1963) and more power with regard to

having and raising children. (Weller, 1968 and 1971).

In addition, it has been found that the more the mother works the greater is her family power. In other words, full-time working mothers have more family power than part-time working mothers and housewives have the least family power. (Kandel and Lesser, 1972; Lupri, 1969; and Bahr, et al, 1974). Other studies have shown that the greater the wife's occupation, income and education, particularly in relation to that of her husband, the greater is her family power. (Lupri, 1969; and Bahr, 1972).

Other variables such as family size, age of children and others may also be significant in the family power of working mothers. Few studies have controlled for these variables. One such attempt by Hoffman (1963b) showed that when husband's occupation, number of children and age of children were controlled for no relationship existed between working versus nonworking mothers and family power. Heer (1963n) found that "wives who are more powerful may tend to have fewer children and enter the labor force more easily." (Bahr, 74, 178).

In general, research does show that working mothers tend to have greater family power than nonworking mothers, but the cause-effect relationship and interaction of other variables, such as preschool children, is still undetermined.

The effect that the working mother has on the division of labor between husband and wife is more established. (Hoffman,

1974, p. 130). Studies have shown that husbands of employed women help more with household tasks including child-care. While considerable traditionalism remains and working mothers engage in more domestic tasks than do their husbands, the division of household tasks is nonetheless more egalitarian when the mother is employed than when she is not. (Blood and Hamblin, 1958; Hall and Schroeder, 1970; Holmstrom, 1972; Kligler, 1954; Szolai, 1966; Walker, 1970n; and Weil, 1961). Whether or not preschool children have any differing effect on the above conclusions has not been determined.

An abundance of information and data exist on the effects of maternal employment on the child, but very little data exist on the effects of maternal employment on the infant and preschool child. (Hoffman, 1974, p. 165). Early studies on maternal employment and effect on children supported the belief that maternal employment had a great many effects on the child, and all bad. (Glueck and Glueck, 1957; McCord and McCord, 1959; Nye, 1963; Gold, 1961). Later studies concluded that maternal employment had no effects at all. (Hoffman, 1963a). More recently, the assumption has been that maternal employment does have an effect but the effect is dependent on the nature of the employment, the attitude of the mother, her family circumstances, social class, whether employment is full or part-time, the age and sex of the child, the kinds of child-care arrangements, and others. (Hoffman, 1974, p. 1268; Woods, 1972).

If we look specifically at the needs of infants and pre-school-age children, we find child-development research indicating the importance of attachment and a one-to-one relationship in the early years (Spitz, 1945; Bowlby, 1958, 1969; Yarrow, 1964); the importance of reciprocal interactions with an adult (Bronfenbrenner, 1973); need for cuddling (Harlow and Harlow, 1966); need for environmental stimulation (Dennis and Najarian, 1957; Hunt, 1961); the importance of expressive and vocal stimulation and response the mother gives the infant (Emerson and Schaffer, 1964; Kagan, 1969; Lewis and Goldberg, 1969; Moss, 1967) the relationship of the mother-child interaction and the feeling of attachment which the mother has for the child. (Bowlby, 1958; Hess, 1970; Yudkin and Holme, 1963).

The above studies emphasize the importance of the mother-child relationship and the importance of certain "mothering" behaviors for the infant and young child. No evidence exists, however, as to whether or not these roles have to be filled by "the mother" or that this role is better filled by a male or a female. (Hoffman, 1974, p. 154). In addition, whether or not day-care centers can meet these needs has not been established. (Emlen & Perry, Jr., 1974; Hoffman, 1974).

More specifically, very little evidence exists on the effect that maternal employment has on the infant and preschool children. This has been largely due to methodological problems: difficulty in interpreting long-range adjustment in infants and

number of intervening variables. Due to the fact that more and more mothers of infants and preschool children are working, research is attempting to overcome these problems.

Burchinal (1963) examined intelligence scores and school adjustment for a large sample of children in the seventh and eleventh grades. Children whose mothers had been employed when the child was three years old or younger were compared with children whose mothers were employed only when the child was older or whose mothers were never employed. Few statistically significant results were obtained.

Additional research evidence often cited when discussing effect of maternal employment on infants and preschool children is on the Kibbutzim in Israel. Kibbutzim mothers work, and from infancy the child lives in centers. Research results have shown both favorable (Kohn-Raz, 1968; Rabkin and Rabkin, 1969) and infavorable (Bettelheim, 1969; Spiro, 1965), consequences on infants and preschool children in such a system. However, these research results are not necessarily transferrable to maternal employment in the United States. According to Bronfenbrenner (1973), Kibbutzim children spend more time each day interacting with their parents than do children in the more conventional nuclear family arrangement, and the time they spend together is less subject to distraction.

To summarize, the importance of the early mother-child interactions is well established, but whether or not maternal

employment effects these--the amount of stimulation and person-to-person interaction available to the infant, whether the mother's absence interferes with her serving as the stable adult figure needed by the infant, or whether the attachment of the infant to the mother or the mother to the infant is jeopardized--cannot be stated. It is expected, that effects depend on the extent of the mother's absence, her attitude and the care she provides the child when she is home, family circumstances and nature of substitute care. Additional research is needed before definite conclusions can be drawn.

Another important issue to which research has been directed is the effect of children and maternal employment on the mother. Both physical and psychological effects have been researched.

Feld (1963) addressed the question of the physical health of employed mothers. Their data is based on a national probability sample of 2,460 adult women. Their results showed that:

> working mothers clearly report fewer physical symptoms than mothers who do not work: only 7 percent of the workers report any physical ill health symptoms, while 25 percent of the housewives report some of these symptoms--pains and ailments in different parts of their bodies and not feeling healthy enough to carry out things they would like to do. The differences on the physical anxiety index are smaller: 36 percent of the workers and 44 percent of the housewives report these symptoms. (Feld, 1963, 344).

In addition, Feld (1963) found that about the same proportion of the employed and housewife respondents reported major illnesses in the past, but housewives were more likely--18%--than employed mothers--11%--to list more than one illness.

Hauenstein and Harburg (1973) studied the effects of housework and paid employment on the blood pressure of women. Their research addressed both whether blood pressure differs between employed wives and housewives, and whether feelings of dissatisfaction and incompetence in household and employee roles relate to high blood pressure. They found no significant differences between employed and nonemployed wives. They did find a significant difference between feelings about housework and performance of household tasks. Those who responded affirmatively to "housework is often a strain" and were "often bothered by the feeling I am not doing as good housework as I should be doing" averaged higher blood pressure than those who answered the questions negatively. However, the reverse occurred regarding levels of blood pressure and attitude toward work. Women who "wanted to quit working" averaged lower blood pressure.

In summary, research tends to support the fact that there is no basis for a general concern about the health of employed mothers. (Nye, 1974a, 209). Whether or not mothers of preschoolers would alter these conclusions cannot be stated because the research has not controlled for them specifically.

Various variables have been researched in an attempt to

assess the psychological effect that preschool children and maternal employment has on the mother. To begin with, a study by Parnes, et al. (1970) showed a relationship existed between working mothers of preschool age children and dislike of the mothering role. This relationship was peculiar to mothers of preschoolers compared to mothers of older children. In other words, the presence of a preschool child in the home is a motivating factor for some mothers to seek employment because they discover that they don't like mothering. This again is evident in a study of 42,845 employed, college-graduate women, where 12 percent of those who were mothers of children under 6 years indicated that their main reason for working was "to escape household routine." For this group, it was the most common of the nonfinancial reasons. Only 4 percent of the mothers of school-aged children gave this response. (U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, 1966).

Once the mothers commence working, they tend to have guilt, anxiety and inadequacy feelings about their roles as mothers and wives. (White, 1972; Kligler, 1954 ; Feld, 1963). In addition, their anxieties are exacerbated when the mothers feel dissatisfied with their substitutes. (White, 1972). A study of 1,092 mothers in a small Washington city disclosed that anxiety was more prevalent among women who left their children with mother substitutes to go to work than among mothers who left them to engage in other activities; and mothers who were anxious,

when leaving children to go to work were more likely to be anxious leaving them for other activities. (White, 1972). On the other hand, working mothers tend to be happier in their work than housewives (Kligler, 1954), and talented college graduates who are full-time housewives are more anxious and overly concerned about their children than a comparable group of talented women who combined a professional career with motherhood. (Birnbaum, 1971). It is difficult to determine how much anxiety results from employment and how much results from the possibility that working mothers tend to be more anxious people to begin with.

Even though working mothers of preschool children, tend to be anxious, guilty and unsure of themselves as mothers and wives, this does not seem to negatively affect their enjoyment of their children, or of being parents, or of their lives in general. In fact, it tends to have a positive effect. In a study of 104 employed mothers and a matched sample of 104 housewives who had children aged three to five, it was found that employed mothers had more positive feelings about their parental activities and about their children then nonemployed mothers. (Nye, Perry, and Ogles, 1963). This finding appears to be true of mothers of preschool as well as of school-age children. (Nye, 1974a).

In another study, employed mothers were found generally better satisfied with their lives whether the family was large or not, and the presence or absence of preschool children failed to have an appreciable effect as a test variable. In addition,

the employed mothers of preschool children verbalized more satisfaction with their daily lives than did their nonemployed equivalents. (Nye and Hoffman, 1963).

Not only do employed mothers tend to feel more positive about their children, their parental activities and their lives in general, they also have a more positive image of themselves than do housewives. (Feld, 1963). Feld (1963) found that 80 percent of employed mothers compared to 65 percent of the housewives mentioned self-characteristics that were positive and only 7 percent of the employed compared with 17 percent of the housewives made negative statements. The employed, however, tended to feel less adequate and have less self-confidence in their ability in the child-care role than housewives. Whether or not any differences existed with mothers of preschool age children as compared to school-age children was not assessed.

Another variable of concern regarding maternal employment has been that of mental illness. It was thought that anxiety, guilt, role conflicts and added responsibilities might result in greater occurrence of mental illness among employed mothers. Research has shown the exact opposite to be true. Birnbaum (1971) reported good mental-emotional health for a larger proportion of professionally employed mothers than equally able full-time housewives. Feld (1963) and Sharp (1963) in two separate studies found fewer psychosomatic illnesses in employed mothers as compared to housewives. Again, whether or not

preschool children would alter these conclusions has not been assessed.

SUMMARY

This chapter has dealt with some of the psychological factors which are affected by mothers working, particularly mothers of preschool age children. These factors included husband-wife relationships, family power structure, division of labor, children, and finally, the attitudes, emotions and physical states of the mother herself. Research is scarce, particularly in the area of maternal employment and presence of preschool children. Research results are inconsistent and cause-effect relationships are virtually impossible due to the difficulty in controlling for all of the interacting variables: income, education, husband's occupation, size of family, age of children, social class, and others. Additional research is desperately needed in this area, as the percentage of maternal employment increases.

Based on the available studies, the following conclusions can be stated: (1) slightly more marital problems exist among couples in which the mother is employed, particularly in families with preschool children present and in families of lower-class and lower educational levels; (2) employed mothers tend to have more power within the family than nonworking mothers; (3) division of labor between the husband and wife is more egalitarian

in families where the mother is employed; (4) maternal employment does not have a negative effect on school-age children if the home atmosphere and child-care facilities are positive, (Hoffman, 1974a) but the effect of maternal employment on preschool age children is still too scarce to draw even this conclusion; (5) maternal employment does not have adverse effects on the mother; (6) working mothers tend to be happier with their work and with their children, their families, and their lives in general than nonworking mothers; (7) but working mothers also tend to feel more anxious, guilty and inadequate in regard to their roles as mothers and wives; (8) working mothers have more positive self-concepts than nonworking mothers; and (9) maternal employment does not seem to have adverse effects on mental-emotional health. Points six and seven were true for mothers of both pre- and school age children. It cannot be stated whether or not age of children is a discriminator within the other points.

The next and final chapter will look at the role that family, community and psychological services can play in alleviating the problems which are caused by maternal employment.

PROBLEMS OF THE WORKING MOTHER AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FAMILY, COMMUNITY AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

For mothers to serve as major economic producers is not a new, but a very old phenomenon. (Rossi, 1965; Ridley, 1972). Prior to the Industrial Revolution mothers' economic productiveness was largely home based. Beginning with the Industrial Revolution, it became common for mothers to leave the home to work out of economic necessity. Today there is an ever-increasing flow into paid employment outside the home of mothers of middle-class and blue-collar families who are above the level of absolute economic need. This employment requires the mother to leave home for most or all of the day, during the working days of the week. Mothers working outside the home, not out of economic necessity, is the new and previously uncommon phenomenon. (Hoffman, and Nye, 1974).

Housekeeping and child-care duties have lessened, but they have not ceased. Housekeeping and child-care duties are more mechanized and have a potential for being more monotonous and less creative, prestigious and enjoyable. This has been true, particularly since 1950. Societal expectations still place housekeeping and child-care tasks on the mother. The result is that when the mother stays home full-time she tends to become unhappy, bored and dissatisfied. When she seeks employment to combat this unhappiness, boredom and dissatisfaction, she

encounters anxiety and guilt from a society which says that she should stay home to do her housework and take care of her children. In addition to this psychological stress and strain, the working mother also has to face the physical stress and strain of two jobs: outside and inside the home. These added responsibilities are even more prevalent with preschool age children, who are less self-sufficient and more demanding than older children. For the working mother not to give-out under these pressures, she needs the support and understanding of her family and community, and often the assistance of a psychological service. The support and assistance of the family, community and psychological services are particularly important during the transitional period between the roles of full-time housewife to part- or full-time working mother. What kind of support, understanding and assistance can the family, community and psychological services best provide the working or future working mother as she attempts to cope or prepare to cope with these problems? These are the questions which this chapter will attempt to answer.

Research, some of which was reviewed in the previous chapter, tends to show that school-age children are not impaired by their mother's working. Research is not available to make a similar statement on infants of working mothers. Research also shows that marital relationships can both suffer and prosper when the

mother is working; that mothers experience much anxiety and guilt but more positive self-concepts when working; and employed mothers tend to have better physical and mental health. In addition, research, although not previously discussed, does show that part-time employment of working mothers lessens marital problems, (Axelson, 1963; Nye, 1963; Orden and Bradburn, 1969) community dissatisfaction (Sharp, 1963) and overall stress and strain (Hoffman and Nye, 1974) of the working mothers. Availability of adequate child-care services, especially of working mothers of preschool children, also counteracts the stress and strain of working mothers (Emlen and Perry, Jr., 1974).

This above research provides data to support what the community can do to assist the working mother: (1) have a more positive attitude toward behavioral outcome of children of working mothers; (2) increase availability of part-time employment for working mothers; and (3) help support adequate child-care services.

The research, as previously discussed, also shows that working mothers tend to have a better self-concept and to be happier in general. This, in turn, results in them feeling and behaving more positively toward their spouse, their children and their family as a whole. This should encourage the family, particularly the husband, to support and encourage the mother-wife to work if she so desires. Willingness to share more

equally in the household and child-care responsibilities can be a way in which the family can be of further help to the working mother.

Most important is the role of psychological services. Psychological services are most likely to have access to the research data through which the family and the community can be educated about how they can help the mother who wishes and/or needs to work out of personal desire or economic need. It is important then that psychological services remain current in such research and make it available to the community through pamphlets, newspaper articles, lectures and workshops. This can, by nature, be preventative service.

Psychological services can also educate their own employees to be more enlightened and acceptive of working mothers. Psychological services need to provide accepting and unbiased therapy for family, marital, child and individual problems which arise due to the mother-wife's working. In addition, Psychological services can prevent or minimize the intensity of the family, marital, child and individual problems which arise from the mother-wife working by providing vocational counseling for women who are thinking about entering the work force.

Women who are becoming aware of their desire or need to work face the problems of making decisions regarding: What type of work will be congruent with present values, interests, skills, aptitudes and experiences? What will be the attitudes

and concerns of husband and family? And, what education and employment are available? (Matthews, 1968). Psychological services need to provide therapists who can work with women facing these problems in an unbiased and enlightened manner.

Here, we will summarize eight phases of vocational counseling based on those formulated by Esther Matthews which will facilitate the mother wishing to work to answer and deal with her questions and concerns. These phases can overlap and intermesh according to the individual.

> Phase I: Inner Preparation: This phase deals primarily with the woman thinking through (a) her reasons, fears, and expectations of seeking employment; (b) what she wishes to gain from it; (c) how her family and friends will react; (d) the risks involved; and (e) is this really what she wants to do? When the woman is reasonably sure that this is what she wants to do and that she is willing to take the risks, then she is ready for Phase II.

> Phase II: Intensive Family Involvement: This stage consists of bringing the family together to discuss as a group the idea of the mother working, the kinds of plans she is considering, the changes within the home which would result and the ideas, concerns, and suggestions of other family members regarding the mother's ideas. When a reasonable level of acceptance and a workable plan of time, energy and money have been agreed on, Phase III begins.

> Phase III: Vocational Experimentation: Phase III is to provide an opportunity for the mother (a) to fantasize exactly what she wants to do and (b) to try it out by visiting the place she wishes to work, doing some volunteer work and/or talking with people similarly involved.

Phase IV: Vocational Planning: Phase IV provides the women with the opportunity to make specific plans which will prepare her to actualize her fantasies. This might include assessing the need for additional education, refresher courses, reviewing the steps one needs to take in finding where desirable jobs are available, as well as, how to apply and interview for them.

Phase V: Vocational Implementation: This phase can be carried out through both individual and group counseling. During this phase the woman is provided with the opportunity to talk about the fears, problems and concerns that evolve during the early stages of implementing her plan of further education, job hunting, and beginning work.

Phase VI: Vocational Analysis: This phase can also be accomplished in an individual or group setting. Here the woman has the opportunity to think through and share her experiences in her new job and how she is integrating these experiences with her family, friends and self. In addition, she can relate to others how she is resolving the problems which arise as she attempts to integrate her new life-style with her old life-style.

Phase VII: Vocational Resynthesis: This phase can also be done in an individual or group setting. At this phase, the woman can continue to share the experiences which she is having, as well as to fantasize about some new desires or goals which have resulted from her present experiences. An example might be the mother who returned to teaching and discovers that she might like to return to school to become a school principal.

Phase VIII: Vocational Development Resource: This final phase allows the woman to share with other women who are just beginning Phase I. This, too, can be done in an individual or group setting.

The psychological service which provides the above form of

assistance can be very helpful to the mother seeking and entering employment. It can be very preventative, by providing the woman with the opportunity to become aware of the problems which might arise, to clearly and systematically think through how she will deal with these problems and finally, to provide a support system which will facilitate her dealing with the problems when they do occur. This can be done at both the individual, marital and family levels.

SUMMARY

This chapter has attempted to provide some suggestions as to how the family, community and psychological services can help the working mother or future working mother deal with the problems of guilt, anxiety, family, marital, child and individual problems which result from the mother working. It has been suggested that the family can help by being supportive and understanding of the mother's desire or need to work and helping share household and child-care responsibilities. The community can help by being more accepting and positive towards mothers working, and by making part-time employment and child-care services more available. Psychological services can help by making available to the community research results on working mothers, and most important, providing unbiased vocational, family, marital, child and individual counseling for working mothers. The importance of implementing the above support, understanding and assistance

for the working mother can not be over-emphasized due to the ever-increasing flow of mothers into the work force.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This paper has attempted to look at the working mother in the United States, particularly between 1950 and the present. The focus has been directed to the mother of preschool age children. Due to lack of research on working mothers of preschoolers, it has been necessary to present research which is more broadly focused on the working mother, in general, and the working mother of school-age children. From this research we can only generalize as to the meaning this research for working mothers of preschoolers has.

We do know that often times there is little significant difference between variable effects on working mothers of school-age children as compared to working mothers of preschoolers. This is true of such variables as mothers' happiness toward children and family; anxiety, guilt and inadequacy feelings toward mother-wife roles; and mothers' family power. These variables differentiate working mothers from non-working mothers but not working mothers of school-age as compared to working mothers of preschool age children.

Other variables discriminate between working mothers of school-age as opposed to preschool age children: degree of

marital problems, marital status, education, reason for working, number and age of children, work committment, husband's salary, and race.

Other research has not controlled for presence of preschool age children, so it is impossible to say whether a difference exists. These variables include such things as psychosomatic illnesses, mental health, self-concept and division of labor.

Although the above research did not control for presence of preschool-age children, it did include families where they were present. Unfortunately, this is not true of research done on effect of mothers working on preschool age children. Effect of mothers working on children has been very narrowly directed toward school-age children, almost totally ignoring preschoolers.

Not only has this paper reviewed research on sociocultural and psychological factors as they relate to the working mother, it also attempted to make some suggestions as to how the family, community and psychological services can assist the working mother as she struggles with problems peculiar to her situation. It was noted that women have always been involved in economic production. Only recently have women commenced leaving the home to work because of personal desires as opposed to economic need. As a result these working women are put in the position of challenging the values of their family, community and self. These women need an abundance of support, understanding and assistance during this period of change. The family, community

and psychological services are resources which must attempt to meet these needs and this paper has made some suggestions as to how this can be done.

In summary, women's life-styles as mothers and wives are changing. More and more mothers are entering the labor force, and many of these mothers have children at preschool age level. Much research is needed before definite conclusions can be drawn as to what sociocultural factors influence this behavior, what effects a mother's working has on her children, family, society and self, and what the best approach is in helping the working mother work.

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